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Executive Registry

80-4367

20 May 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: NIOs and NFAC Office Directors

FROM : PB/NSC Coordinator

SUBJECT : Presidential Briefing Process (U)

1. While the basic thrust of supporting the DCI in his preparation for various meetings and briefings has not changed (my memorandum of 20 August 1979 still applies), I wanted to restate the procedures that have been evolved in the development of Presidential Briefings specifically.
(U)

2. Briefings:

- So far as we know the current biweekly schedule will continue (how the upcoming political conventions and campaigning will affect this schedule remains to be seen).
- Topics for briefings will continue to come from a variety of sources:
 - DCI initiative
 - Suggestions by NIOs/analysts to PB/NSC Staff (more encouraged)
 - Ideas which emerge from DCI meetings (e.g. with NIOs, with Agency or Community Deputies)
 - Current events/crises
 - Outgrowth of subjects being developed for other purposes (e.g. NIEs, satellite problems, papers for SCC/PRC meetings)
 - Subjects identified as key items of White House interest (e.g. prior Presidential trips)
- Planning for the immediate future involves preparation of briefings with a regional focus. It is to be expected, however, that shorter briefing items on specific countries/crises/etc. will be used as events dictate. (C)

3. Pre-Briefs: Preparations are constructed around two such sessions.

- The final one, as has always been the case, is normally scheduled on the Monday before a briefing, and deals exclusively with the subjects to be covered (final decisions on talking points, graphics, etc.).

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REASON

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- The first Pre-Brief is normally scheduled on Wednesday of the off week. The character of this session is somewhat different--it is more of a screening session for possible topics.
 - The primary purpose of this session is to provide a forum for discussion/exchange of ideas before a major effort is undertaken to develop a specific briefing (emphasis on surfacing differing opinions and points of view).
 - The desired output is a DCI decision on which topics should be:
 - (a) Pursued for the next Briefing
 - (b) Developed for subsequent Briefing consideration
 - (c) Handled via PDB or separate memorandum
 - (d) Dropped as topic for specific treatment with the President.
- Preparations for the initial Pre-Brief/screening session:
 - On the Friday after a Presidential Briefing we send the Director material from which he selects topics for discussion.
 - This material includes a combination of the following:
 - (a) A "thrust" outline (1 page) representing what an NIO or analyst feels could be the major theme of a presentation.
 - (b) A typescript or recent production effort on a potential topic (This might be sent alone or with a "thrust" outline).
 - (c) A listing of possible ideas, based on a variety of inputs, from which a briefing could emerge (These are bounced off NIOs or analysts first).
 - Upon receipt, on Monday, of the DCI's decisions for discussion topics, the lead analyst prepares a brief set of points to focus the discussion (in cases where a "thrust" outline had been provided, that, with answers to any DCI questions/comments, is used). These are circulated among the attendees to allow each to prepare their own position.
 - Once specific topics for the next Briefing are selected at the Pre-Brief, the more intensive cycle of briefing preparations are undertaken. (C)

4. The underlying intent of the process as outlined above is to try and minimize the effect on all concerned while meeting the Director's need to be prepared to cover, with the President, those subjects of greatest import.

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- Members of this office [redacted] have been named to fill the slots vacated by [redacted] will work closely with concerned NIOs/analysts in all phases of the briefing process.
- By keeping the preparations for the initial Pre-Brief to the minimum necessary to engage in meaningful discussion with the Director, analysts should suffer less disruption in their other work.
- It should be remembered that the Director enjoys the opportunity afforded by the Pre-Briefs to meet with NIOs/analysts and benefit from their individual views on those subjects weighing either on his mind or on theirs.
- It is possible that the Director may designate part of the time set aside for Pre-Briefs to meet with people to discuss topics unrelated to the Presidential Briefing process (e.g. review Soviet Brigade status)--preparations for these sessions will be conducted as the situation warrants. (C)

5. If any questions, suggestions or recommendations come to mind regarding topics for briefings, how to make the process better, etc., please let me know. (U)

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cc: DD/NFA
Ch/NIC

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